

Good afternoon. My name is Jamie Thayer, and I am the Title IX Coordinator at University of Maryland Global Campus. In my role I frequently work with student parents, and believe that there is so much more we can do to support student parents, which HB 006 can help the State of Maryland collect data to gain insight into the many challenges to help these students be successful.

According to a study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research in 2019, 26 percent of students nationwide are parents, and 62 percent of those are single mothers. 40 percent of student parents report feeling isolated as a parenting student on campus. Despite these challenges, 75 percent of student parents have a GPA of 3.75 or higher.

Increasing support for student parents is an issue very near to my heart. I was a student parent, completing my undergraduate and graduate degrees as a single mother. If there was support available to student parents at my university, it was not something that was well known to the average student. Being a single parent allowed me to go from relying on support and aid from the state to being a contributing professional who was then able to put both of her children through college debt-free.

Collecting accurate and substantive data on student parents in the state of Maryland could do so much to help identify key areas of needs for students. This would enable institutions of higher education to be able create policies and procedures to support student parenting success, and to create or amend programming that will help these students to successfully complete their higher education goals.

This could not be more timely for the University of Maryland Global campus. In December our university just enacted a Pregnant and Parenting Student Policy to align with the Title IX Educational Amendments of 1972. In my role as the Title IX Coordinator I strive to identify and respond to the unique challenges these students face. Additionally, UMGC is currently partnering with FamilyU, Generation Hope for the next two years. FamilyU is designed to build and refine institutional competencies to improve student parent success.

As an institution we are working on strategies to gain access to data and tools to contextualize student parent challenges and supports, and the passage of HB 006 will help to increase awareness and support for student parents across the state of Maryland. Student parent success in higher education will help citizens across the state improve their lives through higher education.

Thank you for your time.